

# A comparison of outcomes between the Solihull Approach relationship-focused universal antenatal parents group and traditional parentcraft groups.

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The Solihull Approach antenatal parenting group 'Understanding pregnancy, labour, birth and your baby' combines traditional information about pregnancy with a focus on developing the relationship with the baby before birth. There are 5 sessions of 2 hours each. A pre and post measures design has been completed and a controlled study is now nearing completion.

## Pre and post measures design

26 fathers and 34 mothers completed all questions (n=60). All mean scores change in a positive direction on all scales. Results of formal statistical analysis are discussed below. The findings are consistent with our previous pilot study.

- Global attachment (MAAS/PAAS scores) increased.
- Quality of Attachment subscale scores increased for fathers and Time spent thinking about the baby increased for mothers.
- Intention to breastfeed increased for the mothers
- Pregnancy related anxiety decreased for the mothers

### 1. Maternal/Paternal Antenatal Attachment Scale

There were statistically significant increases between pre- and post- measurements for the overall samples ( **$p < 0.001$** ), for Mums ( **$p < 0.010$** ) and Dads ( **$p < 0.001$** ) for the Total, as well as for the Quality and Time scores of the MAAS/PAAS scale (excepting the Mums for the Quality score).

### 2. Intention to Breast Feed Question

There was a significant difference between the pre- and post-Feed score for the overall sample ( **$p = 0.005$** ), indicating that parents move up the scale towards a greater proportion of breast feeding. This difference was observed for the Mums ( **$p = 0.007$** ) but not for the Dads ( $p = 0.257$ ).

### 3. Intention to Stop Smoking Question:

There were no significant differences between the pre- and post- smoke scores for the whole sample ( $p = 0.197$ ), Mums ( $p = 0.317$ ) and Dads ( $p = 0.109$ ).

### 4. PHQ-4: an ultra-brief screener of anxiety and depression

There were no differences between the pre- and post- measurements of PHQ Anxiety, PHQ Depression and PHQ Total score for the whole sample and also for the Mums and Dads.

### 5. The Pregnancy Related Anxiety Questionnaire

Significant results are shown in bold underline in the table below.

PRAQ Total score was significantly lower between the pre- and post-measurements for the Mums ( **$p < 0.001$** ) but not for the Dads ( $p = 0.135$ ). This means that, as a group, Mums were less anxious at the end of the course.

## References:

- Marroun, H., Schmidt, M., Franken, I., Jaddoe, V., Hofman, A., Van Der Lugt, A., Verhuist, F., Tiemeier, H., & White, T. (2014) Prenatal tobacco exposure and Brain Morphology: A prospective study in young children. *Neuropsychopharmacology*, 39, pp792-800
- Misri, S. and Kendrick, K. (2007) Treatment of perinatal mood and anxiety disorders: a review. *Canadian Journal of Psychiatry*, 52, 489-98.

## Control study

Relationship-focussed antenatal groups which take account of brain development research are new to the market and little is known about their outcomes, or how they compare to traditional parentcraft classes. The control study uses a control group design with pre and post measures. A range of measurement tools were used to measure factors either known to have an influence on the parent-child relationship (e.g. antenatal anxiety & depression, Misri & Kendrick 2007, feelings towards the unborn baby), theoretically predicted to have an influence (pregnancy-related anxiety), or known to strongly impact the child's wellbeing directly (intention to breastfeed, smoking/intention to stop smoking e.g. Marroun et al, 2014).

Control Group: 35 parents attending traditional 2 session antenatal group, run by midwives.

Intervention Group 1: Novice facilitators: 35 parents attending the new 5 session Solihull Approach antenatal group run by the same midwives newly trained in the Solihull Approach course.

Intervention Group 2: Experienced facilitators: 35 parents attending the new 5 session Solihull Approach antenatal group run by midwives highly experienced in the Solihull Approach course.

The same questionnaires are being used as for the Pre and post measures design study, apart from the PHQ-4 has been replaced with the Edinburgh Postnatal Depression Scale.

1. Maternal/Paternal Antenatal Attachment Scale
2. Intention to Breast Feed Question
3. Intention to Stop Smoking Question:
4. Edinburgh Postnatal Depression Scale
5. The Pregnancy Related Anxiety Questionnaire

## Results

Data for the control group is complete and data collection for the Intervention groups is nearing completion. This will enable a comparison between traditional and relationship based antenatal groups. It will also allow an examination of any differences in outcome between groups run by novice and experienced facilitators.